

in the cultivation of hemp and manufacture of linen, and did not need the encouragement of the rewards.

The English government, however, never entertained the idea of the manufacture of either linen or woolen cloths in the colony with any degree of favor. The Englishmen were willing, to be sure, that Virginia should produce raw materials, but claimed for themselves the right and privilege of manufacture. However, the wishes of the English people did not greatly concern the colonists. They were rapidly learning that in many things they must look out for themselves, and that if it should prove profitable for them to manufacture into finished products their own raw materials, it would not be wise for them to hesitate to do so.

The act that was repealed in 1685 was re-enacted in 1693 with some modifications. This time the act provided that instead of the tobacco used for rewards being taken from the general levy, it was to be furnished by each county to its own growers. Under this new act three pounds of tobacco were to be given for every ell of manufactured linen. The linen was to be not less than three-quarters of a yard wide, nor less than fifteen yards in length. Three samples were required from each person claiming the reward. A special reward was offered of eight hundred pounds of tobacco for the piece of the best quality of linen; six hundred pounds for the second grade, and for the third grade four hundred pounds of tobacco were offered. This act remained in force until 1699.

In spite of all this, however, the colony never gave itself to any very general cultivation of flax. In 1698, in answer to a communication from the Governor, asking to what extent the linen had been manufactured in the county of Middlesex, it was answered that the quantity had amounted annually to about fifty yards. This may be fairly taken as an indication of the success that attended the effort to encourage the manufacture of linen. It ought to be understood, however, that in many instances each plantation was manufacturing enough linen for its own use. The Virginians were not slow to discover that it was easier and more profitable to sell tobacco and buy the linen than it was to manufacture linen.

In the manufacture of woolen goods the colonists met with even more stubborn resistance from the English manufacturers. It is somewhat amusing to note how the new country was exploited for nearly everything else imaginable, yet seriously deprecated in the matter of sheep husbandry and woolen industry. It was religiously asserted that the fact that God had denied sheep to Virginia was an indication that the settlers ought not to fly in the face of Providence and undertake that which had already been provided for in the old country. There was, however, an evident determination among the colonists to provide woolen goods at least for their own use. So determined were they in this purpose that in 1659 an act was passed prohibiting the exportation of wool. It was felt that England was not providing clothing sufficient for the needs of the colony, and in 1666 the General Assembly determined to take some active steps in the encouragement of woolen goods. Captain Matthews, Governor Berkeley and others had already shown that it was possible and profitable for the planters to furnish their own households and plantations with woolen goods. The court of each county was ordered by the General Assembly to establish a loom and to employ a weaver to work it in every county court town. It was later provided that the different counties should build houses in which the children of poor parents should be assembled, and were to be taught to spin and weave as well as to learn other trades.

Under the exceeding pressure brought to bear from the old country, in 1671 the statute prohibiting the exportation of wool was repealed. It was, however, re-enacted again in 1682. The Virginians declared that the manufacture of woolen goods was absolutely necessary for the use of the colony, and besides advantageous, in that it gave occupation to a large number of people.

The penalty for exporting wool or woolen goods was fixed at forty pounds of tobacco for every pound of these commodities shipped out of the country. A severe penalty was fixed against the ship that would carry in its cargo these woolen goods, the masters and seamen being deprived of their own goods and chattels and subject to a term of imprisonment.

It was also sought by the act of 1682 to encourage the manufacture of woolen goods in very much the same way as it had been sought to encourage the manufacture of linen. Six pounds of tobacco were offered to every person who would bring into the court of the county in which he resided a yard of woolen cloth three-quarters of a yard wide. These acts seem to have been measurably successful, and the attention of the planters in general was directed to the policy of at least manufacturing for their own requirements woolen goods. The opposition from England continued, and every sort of expedient was resorted to in order that the manufacture of woolen goods might be made burdensome and unprofitable.

After all, however, the acts of Parliament did not seriously affect the Virginians, because they really had no purpose to enter into the manufacture of woolen goods beyond the supplying of their own needs; and while the colonists continued to manufacture woolen stuffs, it was usually of the coarser quality, mainly for the use of their servants and slaves. All finer woolen stuffs were always imported from England.

The Virginians of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries did not leave behind them their taste and appetite for wines and liquors, and it was very early suggested to them that they might manufacture their own wines instead of importing them at great cost from England. Indeed, it was even imagined that wine might be produced not only for home consumption, but for exportation as well. In a letter from the Governor and Council in Virginia to the company, in 1610, it was remarked that "in every bosage and common hedge, and not far from our Palisade gates were thousands of goodly vines running along the ground and climbing to every tree, which yielded plentiful grapes in their kind. Let me appeal, then, to knowledge if these natural vines were planted, dressed and ordered by skillful vinearones, whether we might not make a perfect grape and plentiful vintage in short time."

At two different times there was an exportation in casks of wine made in Virginia to England. In one instance it was claimed that the wine had been damaged in shipment and did not fairly represent the products of Virginia's vintage. In the other instance the wine never found any very great favor among Englishmen who were used to the finer qualities of wine. Except for individual and domestic use the cultivation of the grape for wine never assumed any very large or hopeful proportions.

It was said that Colonel Beverley planted a vineyard in which he took great pride, and told many stories of his expectations as to the possibilities of grape culture in the colony. It is said that on one occasion his wines were submitted to a gentleman from France, who, doubtless because he was a Frenchman, rendered a very neutral sort of a verdict with reference to the quality of the colony's wines.

The Sainsbury manuscripts have a record of a solemn application made by a Mr. Russell to the London Company, offering to sell a recipe for making wine out of sassafras. He explained this discovery of his as a wine that had all the exhilarating properties of grape wine, without its inebriating quality. It turned out afterwards that he had only discovered the concoction of the later old Virginia mamies, a tea brewed from the roots of the sassafras, and considered a cure for all the ills incident to the spring time. Mr. Russell wanted the modest sum of £1,000 for his recipe, with a small royalty from its future manufacture.

Another benevolent gentleman announced with very amusing naivete that there was a drink to be made from Indian corn that greatly surpassed the products of the breweries in England. One wonders if aforesaid this gentleman had stumbled into the process of making what is known in these latter days as the moonshine article of corn whiskey. If he did, there are numerous successors to him who would doubtless be willing to testify that they had rather have it than any liquors brewed in old England.

In addition to the things that have been suggested, there was an attempt, not altogether unsuccessful, in the manufacture of leather, and for a number of years great interest was taken in the manufacture of hides and even of the finer quality of leather. This was done, however, mainly for home consumption, and there are evidences that the rougher quality of shoes were manufactured in Virginia, and mainly by the individual planters on their own plantations. The General Assembly, as in the case of other attempts in manufacturing, became greatly interested in the manufacture of leather, and passed various regulations governing all phases of the industry. Laws were passed prohibiting the exportation of hides and skins, both tanned and untanned. In the act for ports, passed in 1691, but really never put into operation, an export duty was laid on all leather and furs that were sent from the colony. This was really the repeal of the act forbidding the exportation of leather and furs. In 1693 it was sought by these export taxes on leather and furs to increase the endowment of William and Mary College. A tax of threepence per pound was put on every raw hide, sixpence on tanned hides, and one penny and three farthings on dressed buckskin, and one penny on every undressed buckskin.

In conclusion, it can be said that while many of these attempts at manufacture seemed to be impossible and ludicrous, they were, after all, prophetic of the possibilities of this great continent and of the later achievements of our great American industries. Under primitive conditions and by the use of crude methods, these early settlers were attempting in miniature things that have been realized in very large ways since their day. They made scarcely a single effort in any direction but that in these later days has been made marvelously successful.